

BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION

From October 16th Meeting

OBJECTIVE: The purpose of this document is to begin highlighting the KEY FINDINGS of the research that has been shared with us to be combined and organized into our first section of the report.

By the October 28th meeting, contribute any findings that serve as supportive background for determining sustainability in our schools. I have indicated my initials next to my first few comments and it would be helpful to follow for us to track who commented.

FINDINGS:

1. A May 2008 School Efficiency Review of Charlottesville City Schools conducted by MGT of America, Inc., indicated 62 total recommendations with 21 with fiscal implications that could save up to \$16.8M over a five year period. (NH)

2. The CCS Reconfiguration assessment from 2010 yielded projects totaling up to \$36.1Mil in construction costs and estimated annual savings up to \$870,000. Options for this plan included (1) no action, (2) closing one elementary school, (3) existing as six elementary schools, PK-5 and two middle schools 6-8, and (4) existing as six elementary schools PK-5 and one middle school. Options 2-4 all lead to annual operational savings. (NH)

· Enrollment in Charlottesville City Schools (CCS) declined from 4,454 in 1993 to 3,943 in 2013, a decrease of more than 10%. Enrollment declined to a low of 3,763 in 2009 and then increased to 3,943 in 2013. The schools project enrollment to increase to 4,361 by 2015. (Data provided to Commission by CCS) (BW)

· All of the city's school buildings were estimated to have some excess capacity as of 2010. The School Facility Use and Grade Configuration Study estimated excess capacity at 25% across the school system in 2008-2009. CCS provided 2010 data for capacity assessment that reflected the maximum class size policies set by the School Board. Based on those policies, total excess functional capacity was reported as 7% across the system. Schools with the greatest excess functional capacity as of 2010 were Clark, Venable and Greenbrier. Walker Upper Elementary School had the least. (Data from the Facility Use Study and CCS) (BW)

· City General Fund Revenue for 2008-2009 was \$142,336,000. General Fund Revenue for 2011-2012 was \$144,825,621. General Fund revenue budgeted for 2012-2013 was \$148,167,000. (City Manager's Office) (BW)

· In FY 2008, the schools received \$38,340,000 in operating funds from the city, an increase of 12.7% over the previous year. In FY 2014, the city contributed \$44,067,000 in

operating funds to the schools, plus \$2,630,000 in one-time funds for operating costs with no long-term funding source behind this. (Data from City Manager's Office) (BW)

- From 2003 to 2013, state funding for CCS declined from \$13,659,000 to \$12,765,000, a reduction of 6.5% at the same time state mandates for certain activities increased. (Data provided by CCS) (BW)
- Charlottesville City Schools have \$15 million in planned capital expenses from 2013-2019. There are another \$7.4 million in unfunded capital projects identified for that time period. (CCS 5-year Capital Improvement Program and Unfunded List) (BW)
- The latest projected cost of the proposed school re-configuration project is \$61 million. This is a third more than the \$40 million cost estimate provided in the School Configuration Study of 2010. (CCS Five-Year Capital Improvement Program and 2010 Reconfiguration Study) (BW)
- The School Configuration Study estimated annual operating cost savings of \$870,000 per year for the reconfiguration option. These would be off-set in the first ten years by increased debt service costs estimated at \$2-\$3 million per year to finance the reconfiguration, based on the 2010 estimated cost of \$40 million. (Data provided by CCS) (BW)
- The Charlottesville real estate tax was reduced several times over the past 20 years from \$.11/hundred of assessed value in the 1990s to \$.95/hundred in 2007 and every year since. There were total assessment increases of more than 10% per year from 2002 to 2007. Since 2009, total assessments have declined or seen very modest increases of 1-2% for residential real estate. Commercial real estate assessments by contrast increased 8% in 2012. (Data from City Manager's Office.) (BW)